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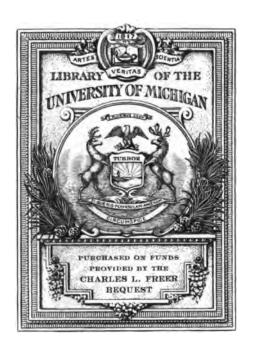
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# The Oriental Influence on Italian Ceramic Art

on the Ceramic Art of the Jtalian Renaissance with Illustrations by Henry Wallis

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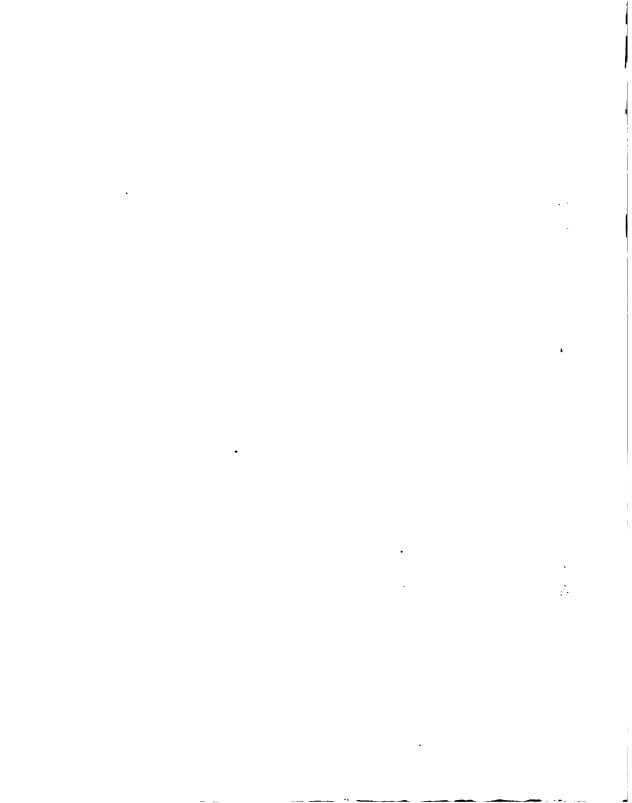
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#### INSCRIBED TO

## Dr. WILHELM BODE

WHO HAS EARNED THE LASTING GRATITUDE AND REGARD OF ALL LOVERS OF THE ART OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



### INTRODUCTION.

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IN a small volume issued three years ago by the present writer, it was suggested, among other things, that a satisfactory history of Maiolica will scarcely be arrived at until a more extended illustration of the earlier examples of the art has been drawn and published. The proposition received the assent of several distinguished authorities on ceramic art, and thereby has encouraged the writer to attempt the illustration of certain phases of Maiolica produced during the XVth Century. But considering the striking evidence of the Oriental influence on the art of the Italian Renaissance, and especially on its ceramic art, it is obvious that at least some acquaintance with the work of the contemporary Eastern potters is an essential preliminary in an enquiry relating to the Italian wares. This Eastern pottery is, however, rare and not easily accessible to the student. Hence the writer ventures to think that the description and portrayal, in a simple manner, of a limited series of Oriental vessels and tiles may, perhaps, be serviceable in some slight degree to those unfamiliar with the actual objects. The series includes a few specimens of Spanish-Moorish pottery, the inclusion being permissible because the Spanish art was derived from the East, and there are good reasons for believing the potters were Oriental emigrants.

ITALY'S long period of torpor and artistic sterility following the break up of the Roman Empire by the invasion of the Goths and the Vandals terminated in the XIIIth Century. In the dark and dreary interregnum of the Middle Ages what of artistic effort had been attempted was confined within the limit of a lifeless conventionality. Even painting was as it were a mechanical process, turned out according to cut-and-dried rules, such as we read in the book compiled for the monkish craftsmen of Mount Athos: the effigies of the saints and martyrs covering the church walls scarcely ranking above the stencilled decoration of modern so-called ecclesiastical art.

Yet at that period in Western Asia and in the Mohammedan countries bordering on the Mediterranean the arts had arrived at a pitch of extraordinary splendour. It was so in the East in every department of artistic production, whether in textiles or metal work, glass or pottery, the qualities of design and technical skill showed assured and consummate mastery. These wares and fabrics were not unknown to the Italian merchants and the travellers, of whom Marco Polo was a type, who would have seen the lustrous wall-tiles and radiant silks in the Eastern cities they visited. Even some of the objects themselves would have been doubtless introduced into the country through the commercial relations of the republics of Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa, and Venice with Persia, Egypt, and Syria. Gradually they would have come into use among the wealthier classes, who would justly accept them as types of all that was beautiful in their various kinds. Possibly the textiles would be among the first objects to be imported, their soft and lovely colour rendering them especially attractive to the Italians, even as such fragments which have escaped destruction, and are still undimmed by the dust of centuries, appear to eyes jaded by the meretricious glamour of aniline dyes, discordant and, happily, fugitive, displayed on machine-made, adulterated silks, faced to brittleness with chemical compounds. In the XIIIth

Century the Oriental stuffs must have been known in Italy, since we find a poet, Albertuccio della Viola (1260), describing his lady's apparel as being supremely elegant, says the material of her gown was from Syria:

"Vestut' era d'un drappa di Soria La Donna mia."

So also with the vestments and the utensils used in ecclesiastical ritual: those specially reserved for the more solemn functions were from the East, from whence also came many of the carved panels and the decorative faïence adorning the exteriors of the churches.

There is satisfactory evidence for stating that Oriental pottery (the term is not intended to include the wares of the Far East) had arrived at a high degree of excellence as early as the XIth Century; indeed, it is probable that in Egypt the traditions of the ancient art were never lost, and that its practice was maintained on to the period of the Mediæval pottery, of which the Cairo mounds have yielded so many beautiful, although fragmentary, specimens, all valuable as documents for the history of the art. However, the discussion of the very early wares is remote from the object of the present inquiry, which relates only to the Oriental influence on Maiolica during the XVth Century; it is therefore sufficient to point out that at that time the Eastern potters were technically and artistically far in advance of all others. Hence it was to them, as masters of the art, that the Italians, with the practical sagacity of the race, went to learn the secrets of the composition of their marvellous oxides and glazes and the mysteries of the ornamentation, which, then as now, was a source of unceasing delight to all capable of appreciating its beauties.

Much of the impressive effect of the Eastern design arises from its being painted at once in the swift, sure stroke which neither permits nor needs alteration or retouching. This brilliant handwork is arrived at only after long practice, continued even over

generations. Similarly with the colour, the Italians might be fascinated and dazzled by its radiance and splendour, but they would be incapable of harmonising a palette at once so powerful and so refined. The Oriental artists expressed all shades of . sentiment—to those of their own race and creed—they touched all chords of passion by the skilful combinations of their potent primary colours and their delicate secondary compounds. appeared in their compositions and inventions not only always to have selected the right harmony, but to have also obtained absolute control over their oxides in the course of the chemical action they underwent in their passage through the furnace. It was this advanced technique, with all its complex methods and procedure, the Italians had to assimilate before they could compete with their rivals. Their intention was evidently not to reproduce the Eastern wares, such as has been done by French and Italian potters in recent years. From a genuine feeling of self-respect they would scarcely descend to accept the position of mere copyists. Rather, it may be supposed, they were quick to perceive that the ideals of the New Age demanded ampler vehicles of expression than had sufficed for the narrower aims of their predecessors, the Mediseval potters. They might admit that competition in some directions would be hopeless, and yet feel they could infuse their work with a spirit in which the Oriental was lacking. The Italian glazes never shone with colour quite so brilliant as that reflected from the Eastern wares, nor was their light and apparently careless grace of design transferred to the vessels which had passed through the furnaces of Tuscany and the Marches. Those flashes of inspiration illuminating the finest work of Eastern art may never be rivalled by the European, because he can never seize the subtleties or follow the mysterious working of the Oriental mind in its flights of exaltation or in its moods of brooding introspection. The Italians could not weave those fanciful and elegant convolutions of pure ornament which express so much to the Persian and the Syrian, since they were unable to penetrate their significance, but

they created a masculine art wherein more than the mere faint reflection of the wayward and delicate Oriental grace was skilfully and happily blended with Tuscan imaginative virility.

ALTHOUGH it would be beyond the scope of the present work to discuss the history of Oriental ceramic art, a few brief notes must necessarily be added to the technical descriptions of objects which are now for the first time illustrated. They are not, of course, put forth as conclusions which are final and indisputable. The time has not yet arrived for unqualified statement respecting either the date or the derivation of the class of objects here dealt with. It is only after systematic excavations on the sites and in the environs of Eastern cities which were once centres of flourishing artistic industries that sufficient evidence will have been collected to permit assertion like that which can be made respecting the productions of later arts. The search, however, is only now in its initial stage, consequently the following remarks are intended to indicate little more than the evidence which has come within the reach of an individual enquirer. At the same time, as to certain phases of Oriental art, many facts have been discovered which may legitimately be used as starting-points in further enquiry, and thus some general conclusions relating to the place of production and the period of the pottery here illustrated can be advanced which may not greatly err.

The objects have been selected as the most readily available representatives of classes of pottery which were known to the Italians of the XVth Century (except in a few instances, which will be noted), and it is hoped will give a clear idea of the action and working of the Oriental influence, which is quite another thing from stating the fact as an ex cathedra assertion. When some of the examples of the early Italian wares come under consideration and are compared with the following illustrations, it will be seen that there can be no doubt from whence certain ornamental

motives, peculiarities in methods of spacing, with other characteristic details discernible in the early Renaissance pottery, have been adopted.

It might have been preferable to have selected the illustrations from examples of Eastern wares found in Italy. These, however, so far as the writer is aware, are almost unknown. He has seen a few jars, of which three or four are in the South Kensington Museum, and another is given in fig. 20, which have come from old Italian collections. Of fragments he can cite but one, fig. 33 (1), besides a few others of Spanish-Moorish vases found, by himself; there is likewise the Palermo jar, fig. 37, which had long been in a Sicilian church. It is true that many of the finest Spanish-Moorish pieces in collections have been acquired in Italy; also at about the middle of the present century the late Mr. Drury Fortnum and other collectors obtained, mostly from the cities on the Adriatic coast, a certain number of examples of Persian wares of the period of Shah Abbas (1585-1627). This suggests that there is a possibility that then, or previously in the century, specimens of the earlier Persian vases were purchased in Italy by Transalpine collectors. The pieces may have perished, or they may remain unrecognized in remote country houses, a source from which museums now and again have acquired very remarkable examples of Oriental art. At Venice, even within the last twenty years, late Anatolian cups and bowls, the degenerate descendants of illustrious ancestors, were occasionally to be picked up in the old curiosity shops. But it is not to Italy we must now look for illustrations of the Oriental influence.

FIGS. 1-3 are examples of Eastern graffito pottery, which probably found its way into Italy with other merchandise at a very early period. Fig. 1, along with a few pieces in the Louvre, excavated by M. Pottier and M. Reinach at Myrina (Pottier and Reinach, 'La Nécropole de Myrina,' vol. i. p. 238) are perhaps

the earliest specimens of the class at present represented in museums, or at least which have been identified; for the pottery near the border-line of the classic era is little known and the evidence respecting it is of a rather shadowy nature. Yet there is none more interesting or more instructive to the student of the earlier Moslem art. The examples under consideration have indeed been supposed to belong to Greek ceramic art, the Myrina vases being at first classed as antique by their discoverers; the British Museum piece was also supposed to be antique by the dealer who brought it to London. The assumption was not altogether without warrant, as may be seen on examining the glaze and the body, which Mr. A. S. Murray recognized as being the same as that of Ionian Greek vases. Now, however, it will be generally admitted that both the Paris and London pieces belong to the early Byzantine period. Confirmation of the attribution will be found on examining some Byzantine pottery in the Athens Museum, wherein the ornament, in red lines on a yellow ground, is in graffito. The potting is rougher and the drawing slacker, but the method is the same. The further development of the process may be observed in a still later ware, probably Mediæval, excavated by Wood at Ephesus. Here the graffito design has received the adornment of green, raw sienna, and manganese purple, not accurately filling in the pattern but loosely touched on with a rag, the colour has also run in the firing, as in fig. 2. The decorative scheme has naturally rather a casual air, yet the effect is not unpleasing. There has not been found evidence that the Italians copied the earliest of these processes, or that of the vellow slip Byzantine ware. They very likely did so, but the proof has not yet been discovered. The latest methods, however, that of figs. 2 and 3, they certainly adopted, and, as may be seen in most ceramic collections, they attained therein a proficiency of manipulation which has placed their graffito pottery in the first rank. It may be mentioned that both the graffito process and the accidental style of tinting were in practice long before the period

of fig. 2. The graffito ornament is seen on Egyptian pottery of the XVIIIth dynasty and the style of colouring, only in turquoise blue and purple, was in use on Egyptian vessels of the Roman period.

Figs. 2 and 3 are examples of the class of bowls found recently in Cyprus and which are now seen in most museums. They are termed Byzantine by the Greek dealers, and the designation is probably correct with reference to their period, though the pottery was made in various localities in the East not under Byzantine rule. Some of the Cyprus examples in the British Museum, but not figs. 2 and 3, were discovered in excavations conducted by Mr. A. S. Murray at Enkomi, the original Salamis. They were along with skeletons buried in the upper soil of the ancient cemetery and believed to date from the XIIIth Century. The fine qualities of these graffito wares, arrived at by comparatively simple means, are perhaps best seen when a number of them are grouped together in a separate case; their freshness and purity of colour, sometimes of extreme delicacy, is then very apparent. Such an arrangement has been made by Mr. C. H. Read at the British Museum, and in addition to the pleasure afforded by the admirable artistic effect. the series has been rendered instructive by the inclusion of some of the early Italian examples of the method of ornamentation.

Figs. 4-7 illustrate one of the most magisterial forms of ceramic art of any period. The class may be divided into two sections—the one wherein the ornamentation is a combination of Arabic inscriptions, scroll-work, and geometrical motives of singular dignity and impressiveness; the other includes animal decoration, more frequently birds, displayed on a ground sown with leaves and small spirals or dots. The known examples form a group distributed between South Kensington and the British Museums, the Louvre, the Museums of the Hôtel Cluny, Sèvres, and two or three specimens dispersed in private collections. Their precise date has not yet been discovered, it may probably be about the end of the XIVth Century. They have an affinity with a Persian ware

of the end of the XIIIth Century. At the same time the style of drawing on the ornament is suggestive of Syrian or Egyptian derivation. Fragments of the class have been found in the Cairo mounds, which, however, is no conclusive proof they were made in the Nile valley, since the pottery of many lands lies buried in the Some of the examples which have been bought of Italian dealers are said by them to have formerly belonged to old Sicilian families; and, remembering how other works of art and early Renaissance pottery have been long preserved in the palaces of the Italian nobility, it is probable that they were imported into the island at their time of fubrication. But on the strength of the dealers' statement of their provenance they have been termed in some museum catalogues Siculo-Arab—a designation, however, for which not a particle of trustworthy evidence has yet been put forth. No pottery in any way similar has been excavated in Sicily, and the fact alone of the vases bearing Arabic inscriptions renders the attribution in the highest degree improbable. It is likely that some of the known specimens have been acquired in Italy; the writer once saw an albarello of the ware in a palace at Naples.

Of late years the Oriental dealers from Constantinople have brought to London and Paris examples of bowls and vases, some sound, but mostly broken, which they state have been found in They decline to indicate the native excavations in the East. locality, otherwise than that it is vaguely in Syria, somewhere between Aleppo and Bagdad! In several cases the objects are made up of fragments of different vessels joined together, presumably in the childish expectation that purchasers would be deluded into the belief they were perfect vases. In other instances the vessels have lost their shape or been distorted and damaged from accidents in the firing, proving that they have been found on the site of an ancient pottery. Their general characteristics are a thick white body and a vitreous glaze running into tears, the glaze being either transparent or a turquoise colour. The turquoise glaze has in some instances changed to white, as with the ancient

Egyptian pottery, and which arises from the objects having been buried in damp earth. The Neshky inscriptions, the Cufic characters conventionalized into decorative motives, and the passages of pure ornament, frequently of a very elegant type, suggest similar decoration on the Mosul inlaid metal vases of the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries, and to this latter date the pottery probably belongs. The superb Louvre Bacino, fig. 15, is likely to be a little later; its style of ornamentation must certainly have been known to the Italians, as will be seen in future illustrations of the Maiolica bacini. A bacino in South Kensington Museum may be classed with fig. 12; it contains additional slight passages of red in the ornament. The shape of fig. 11 is evidently imitated from the metal ewers with ornamental handles and long spouts, in some cases the sides being ridged or grooved, of which well known specimens are in the British Museum and the collection of Les Arts Décoratifs, at Paris. The piece illustrated is an instance of the foolish custom of the Oriental dealers of grinding smooth the injured parts of fractured vessels. There was probably sufficient remaining on the top of this vessel when it was found to determine the exact form of the lip. Figs. 10 and 16 were brought to England some years ago, and before the recent discovery.

The jar in fig. 20 is an example of the Chinese influence on Syrian faïence, and perhaps the earliest which has been yet identified. Soft paste wares in imitation of Chinese porcelain were produced three centuries later in large quantities in l'ersia, and are fairly well represented in comprehensive collections like that at South Kensington. Earlier pieces from Syria, more refined in style and of which the large bowl in the British Museum is a splendid specimen, can be cited, but those of the XIVth and XVth Centuries have naturally disappeared. Remembering the esteem in which Chinese porcelain was held in Western Asia and Syria during the Mediæval period, and that blue on white was a favourite colour-scheme with the Chinese potters, the attribution of a Chinese influence in the present case may not be erroneous.

The analogies in the leaves and flowers with those on Chinese vases are evident, and if the drawing is more elegant than usually occurs in the pottery of the Far East it is only what happens in instances of obvious imitations of Chinese vases by Persian ceramic The subdued harmonious blue and the toned white ground are strongly reminiscent of the earliest examples of Chinese porcelain in our museums, and which are in striking contrast to the glaring blues and crude whites in the later porcelain made for exportation. In one respect the vessel is unlike the Chinese vases, namely, in the thickness of its sides, which solidity is usual in Syrian and Egyptian pottery of its probable date—the end of the XIVth Century—but is not characteristic of Chinese blue and white, so far as the writer is aware. Evidence as to the date and locality of the fabric where the vase was produced is supplied by the series of wall-tiles, figs. 21-27. These have all come from Damascus, and as the city was long famous for its decorated glazed tiles, they are tolerably certain to have been made there. Comparing the style of drawing in their ornamentation, the colour, and the general technique with the same in the jar, the resemblance in each case is very apparent. The tiles are not dated, but the drawing of the ornate ewers, copied from the above-mentioned Mosul vases, the archaisms in the drawing, together with the hexagonal form, all suggest the art of the XIVth Century. It has happened that a design similar to one of the ewers has been incorporated into the ornamentation of an early Italian vase in South Kensington Museum; and an Italian albarello, whereon the blue and white ornament may have been an adaptation of that on the jar, is also ribbed in the same manner. It is perhaps to these strengthening ribs that the jar owes its preservation.

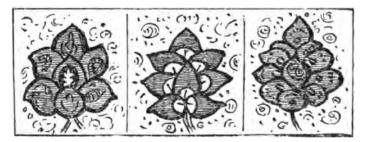
One may venture to hint that possibly the general admiration for Chinese porcelain prevalent in Persia and Syria during the Middle Ages was not altogether based on any inherent artistic superiority of the wares, but rather on account of the technical excellencies they undoubtedly possessed. The vessels were thin, light, and semi-transparent, the glaze was bright and even, and the objects were symmetrically accurate in form, precisely the qualities which appeal at all times to the unartistic eye. Firdusi, Nyzami, and other illustrious Persian poets are emphatic in proclaiming the extreme perfection of Chinese art. But it is possible to write very fine poetry and yet be but an indifferent judge in the more subtle and delicate procedures of artistic execution—to be, indeed, quite insensible to quality in colour and design. History is silent respecting the attitude of the potters of Kashan and Damascus in the face of the Yellow Invasion. We know that in aftertimes the Italians protested against the disastrous influence of Chinese porcelain on their own ceramic art. Doubtless the Persian and Syrian artists were conscious of the inherent superiority of the native pottery in the qualities of imaginative design and colour. They would detect the poverty and absence of grace in the ornamental motives of the Chinese, and they would feel a natural contempt for the trivialities and puerile affectations of their figure compositions, yet they may not have been able to stem the tide of popular taste, supported as it probably was by court influence.

Figs. 29-33 represent fragments derived from the Cairo mounds, a source from which the most valuable materials for the history of Oriental ceramic art are now being extracted. The objects, as stated above, refer to the wares of many lands, the larger number being probably Egyptian, and it may be expected will be found to include specimens of the native pottery from the commencement of the Arab dominion, or at least from the period of the Fatimy Kaliphs. Fig. 30 is similar in design and technique to the portion of a bowl obtained by the late Mr. Fortnum from the facade of a church at Pisa, and which is now in the British Museum. The recognition by Mr. Fortnum that the bowl was Oriental had an important bearing on the study of the history of early Maiolica. It is true he termed it Persian, while more recent research might assign it to Damascus, mainly from similarities of technique, colour,

and drawing with the large hexagonal tiles from the great mosque at Damascus, destroyed by fire a few years since; but the error, if it be one, is trifling, the essential point being that he detected the derivation of the ware to be Oriental. On another point Mr. Fortnum hazarded an assertion requiring, perhaps, stronger proof than he adduced to warrant its acceptance. He stated the bowl was "certainly" built into the church wall early in the XIIth Century (C. Drury E. Fortnum, 'Maiolica,' 1896, p. 14). This may have been the date of the erection of the church, but it does not quite follow that the ceramic decoration of the building was coeval with its erection. Still the discovery of the object was valuable evidence of the introduction of Oriental pottery into Italy at an early period.

Fig. 33 (1) shows the ornament on the inside of a bowl found, among other things, in excavations made in the city of Reggio in The leaf drawing somewhat resembles that on the Damascus blue and white tiles, and likewise that on an Egyptian ware. The ware referred to is illustrated in Dr. Fouquet's valuable monograph on some of the pottery found in the Cairo mounds (Dr. D. Fouquet, "Contribution à l'Étude de la Céramique Orientale," Mémoires de l'Institut Egyptien, 1900), and which it is to be hoped will be followed by other similar studies by the author. The Egyptian fragments, bearing leaf-ornament in blue on whits, are signed "Ghaïby, the Syrian," and are not unlike the present example in style, except that they are painted more carelessly, and therefore might be concluded, as it was by the present writer, to belong to a comparatively late period. Yet the bird drawing on fig. 33 (2), which is inscribed with what is undoubtedly a portion of Ghaïby's signature, fig. 33 (2b), is delineated in an archaic style which, in the absence of a dated example, might incline one to assign it to an even earlier period than that suggested by Dr. Fouquet—the end of the XVIth Century. At the same time the Ghaiby pottery may be a prolonged continuation in Egypt of the style of an early Syrian ware.

The brilliant XIIIth Century Persian lustre faience can scarcely fail to have had an inspiring influence on the rising Italian school. It is unlikely that the Italians knew the secret of the lustre process until the end of the XVth Century, but that they copied, or rather adapted, motives of lustre ornament in ordinary colour is seen from the illustration, which shows in the centre a conventional flower ornamenting a well-known Italian ware of the early Renaissance pottery. It is painted in a bright cobalt-blue, with touches of orange and yellow, on a white ground. The side compartments of the illustration contain conventional flowers from the Veramin tiles dated A.H. 661—A.D. 1262 (see Henry Wallis, 'Persian Ceramic Art, the Godman Collection,' 1893); they are



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painted only in lustre. It will be noted that the adaptation extends even to the reproduction of the spirals and dots covering the white ground. It is probable that the lustred star-tiles were among the objects imported into Italy from Persia, as traces of their shapes and systems of ornamentation occur in Italian pottery, and likewise in other forms of art. But if in this instance the ceramic draughtsmen had not seen specimens of the tiles, the same kind of conventional flower is found on Persian vases of the period. At present there are no means of knowing what were the particular Persian wares which had reached Italy; it may perhaps be concluded that some of the vases decorated with the inmates of the

hareem, as fig. 34, were of the number, and also others bearing figures of knights on horseback, riding to battle or playing at polo.

None of the hitherto discovered Persian XIIIth Century vases show definite dramatic incidents; scenes of this nature, however, are found on a few of the tiles, perhaps the most celebrated being the South Kensington relief-tile representing an incident in the life of King Bahram V.—the tile is illustrated in the Godman Collection. It is probable that not only separate incidents but also continuous stories were depicted on the wall-tiles. The cause why so few have been preserved is owing to their ruthless destruction by the Soonees, who hold that representations of the human figure are forbidden by the Prophet. When these ignorant fanatics do not shatter the tiles to fragments they will endeavour to efface the countenances of the figures painted upon them, which explains how so many of the known figure-tiles are thus injured. It is possible, however, that the instance occurring in fig. 36 has not arisen from an objection to figures in the abstract on the part of the individual who has damaged the face of the man, behind the personage riding on the Brahmini or humped bull. It will be observed that from the position of his arm he is apparently a prisoner, also that snakes are winding round his head. Hence he may be some well-known villain in Persian romance and consequently hateful to every right-thinking believer. The injury may therefore have been the act of an impetuous person whose critical appreciation of dramatic design was but partially developed. Thus we find pious Italian peasants on seeing a particularly realistic representation of the Devil will forthwith, on a sudden impulse of righteous indignation, if they happen to have a knife about them -which is generally the case-slash and score the countenance of his Satanic Majesty. The subject of the picture on the tile may possibly refer to the defeat of the cruel usurper Zohak by the youthful hero Feridoon (Paishdadian dynasty); if so, the central figure is Feridoon, the one on the right is Zohak, and the man

with a flag to the left is Kawah, bearing the royal standard of Persia, the Derufsh-e-Kawanee. The story, which is told at some length by Firdusi in the 'Shah Nameh,' runs briefly thus:-Djemshid, King of Persia, after a long and prosperous reign became puffed up with pride and ceased to adore God, even attributing to himself divine honours. The Lord thereupon withdrew His grace from him, permitting Iran to become the prey of the Arabs. Now at that time the king of Arabia was named Zohak. In his youth the fear of God dwelt not in him, hence he fell an easy victim to the temptation of Iblis, who in the form of a man of friendly counsel incited him to murder his own father, the virtuous king Mardas. When Zohak had ascended to the throne the fiend again appeared before him in the likeness of a young man of prepossessing manners and fluent speech. He was taken into the royal service and became chief cook. In those days the Arabs ate only of the fruits of the earth, but the fiend set himself to corrupt the appetite of Zohak, sending to his table dishes of the flesh of animals. First the meat was of birds, as partridges and pheasants, then seeing the king ate of them greedily he took a loin of veal, seasoning it with a savoury sauce in which were mixed rose-water, old wine, and pure musk. Zohak was ravished with this hitherto unimagined delicacy and in a transport of gratitude told the cook to name his reward. With many soft speeches the wily fiend asked permission to kiss the king on each shoulder. The request was granted. Iblis thereupon kissed the king on both shoulders and at once vanished, but from the places where his lips had touched sprang two black serpents. Zohak had them instantly cut off, two others immediately replaced them, and the surgeons found no means to remove the dreadful reptiles. Again the fiend approached the royal throne, this time in the guise of an aged physician. He said that the only way to kill the serpents was to feed them on human brains, directing that two Persians should be slaughtered daily to furnish the serpent's food; his real object being to depopulate the land. The serpents were duly fed

and Persia was reduced to a state of extreme misery. One night Zohak saw in a dream a young warrior who struck him to the earth with an iron mace, its head shaped like the head of an ox or a cow; he was then bound and dragged to Mount Demayand. awaking he called before him the wise Mobeds and learnt that the young warrior who is to deprive him of the throne is Feridoon, the son of Abtin, who was the grandson of Djemshid. events follow quickly upon each other, search is made for Feridoon, at that time a babe. It was unsuccessful, the child being hidden by his mother who confided him to the charge of the keeper of the beautiful cow Purmajeh, by whose milk he was nourished during three years. The mother then takes Feridoon to Hindustan, where he remained till he was sixteen years of age. Meanwhile matters grew desperate in Persia. Finally Kawah, the blacksmith, after having had sixteen of his sons slain to supply the serpents with their daily food, raised an insurrection, attaching his apron to the head of a lance as the standard of revolt. He sought out Feridoon, who placed himself at the head of the insurgents and after many surprising adventures overcame the usurper, bound him in chains and left him to perish in a cavern on Mount Demavand. Firdusi makes no mention of Feridoon riding on a Brahmini bull or cow, he states that he rides on horseback; neither is there a reference to his carrying what appears like a crozier in the illustration, but emphasis is laid on his ox-headed mace. There are many versions of the legendary stories of Persian heroes, and it is possible that if Feridoon is here represented the incident may have been taken from a source other than the 'Shah Nameh'; also it must be remembered that Oriental artists allowed themselves considerable licence in the illustration of history or poetry.

The tile is painted in lustre with passages of blue and green. Notwithstanding the archaic style of drawing, it places before the spectator an episode of Persian story conceived with singular vividness and in the genuine spirit of Oriental romance. It recalls some of the picturesque miniatures illuminating a fine early copy

of the 'Shah Nameh.' The star wall-tile from the Louvre, fig. 35, is in deep lustre and is a brilliant specimen of a characteristic type of Persian XIIIth or XVIth Century ornament.

Of all the wares which influenced Maiolica the Spanish-Moorish is perhaps the best known to the visitors and students of our public museums. Pottery texts dating as early as the XIIth Century mention the universal admiration it excited at that time: others again speak of the esteem in which it was held in Italy. In the XVth Century ornamental vases in the wares appear to have been expressly commanded from Spain by wealthy Florentines, as is evident from the Medici arms and impresa in fig. 40; others bearing the Florentine lily (fig. 41) seem to have been ordered from the same city. Further proof as to the Tuscan admiration will be seen in dishes and albarelli whereon are copied motives of ornament similar to those on figs. 39 and 47. Although it is probable that some of the Spanish wares had been imported into Italy in the XIIth Century there is no positive evidence on the subject, indeed the information at present attainable respecting the Spanish wares previous to the XIVth Century is of the scantiest. So far as the writer can learn, there is no known example of Spanish lustre pottery antecedent to those in the class to which the large Palermo jar (fig. 37) belongs, and they are not likely to be much earlier than the end of the XIVth Century. Happily the celebrated plaque, formerly belonging to Fortuny, and now in the possession of Senor Don G. I. de Osma (fig. 42), furnishes an early date, which, according to its owner, is between May 1408 and November 1417. Those who know the original will remember that it is no less remarkable for the quality of its golden lustre (translated by photography into black in our illustration) than for the grace and elegance of its fanciful Oriental design. Louvre Albarello, fig. 39, closely resembles the one represented in the foreground of the central compartment of the Van der Goes triptych at the hospital of Sta. Maria Nuova, at Florence: the picture was painted at about the middle of the XVth Century.

Considerable uncertainty exists as to the date of the earliest Italian lustre ware, but the secret of the process is supposed to have been derived from the Spanish. Perhaps evidence on the question may be found in a plate belonging to South Kensington Museum and in two others in the possession of the writer. The lustre thereon is strongly Spanish in character, the ornamentation is uncertain in style, but it might well be an attempt to imitate the Spanish, and yet there are passages which are unmistakably Italian; the technique is more Italian than Spanish, the date is most likely late XVth Century. Hence there is a probability these pieces represent the first efforts of the Italians in lustre decoration; and if so, they strengthen the assumption of the Spanish derivation. The quality of the finest Gubbio and Diruta lustre (Pesaro lustre being apparently a myth invented by Passeri) suggests, however, that in their cases the secret came from a Persian source.

One of the most pleasing and generally popular among the Oriental wares is the so-called Rhodian pottery. Lately it has been incorrectly designated Turkish, apparently because it has been produced in provinces conquered by the Turks; but the name is no more appropriate than would be the appellation British to objects of art made in India since the conquest of the country by the English. The Turk, like the Arab, does not belong to an artistic race; it is, indeed, doubtful if he ever produced art above that of the commonest and most tawdry kinds, although he has, of course, always been willing to avail himself of the services of his subjects who possess artistic capacity. Therefore it would be more scientific to call the pottery by the names of the cities or provinces where it has been made, and there would be no great difficulty in determining the productions of the different pottery centres in the Turkish empire. As to the general characteristics of the ware, it may be briefly stated that the known specimens of the vessels bear floral decoration, as sprays of roses, tulips, and carnations gracefully arranged and realistic in drawing. The ornament is outlined in a brownish black and is painted in cobalt and turquoise blues, green,

and a potent piled-on red (Armenian bole), the ground being white. Occasionally the ornamentation includes human figures and ships, and sometimes is entirely composed of conventional motives, the latter being more usual in the tiles. Possibly none of the specimens hitherto identified are earlier than the XVIth Century; yet an Egyptian amulet of the Pharaonic period in the Berlin Museum shows the same technique and quality of colour, even to the solid red (see Henry Wallis, 'Egyptian Ceramic Art,' 1900, fig. 33). Since the procedure of the Oriental potters can generally be traced back to Egypt, it is probable that this so-called Rhodian ware is derived from that source, the earlier examples not having survived, or not having yet been recognized. If the supposition be correct, it is likely that the pottery was produced at Constantinople and in Byzantine territory before the Turkish conquest, and in that case would probably have been brought to Italy. The question will not be determined until excavations have been made both in Asia Minor and in the soil of Constantinople itself, together with the territory along the Bosphorus. In one particular a XVth Century Italian class of pottery displays an analogy with the so-called Rhodian, namely, in the piled-on blue composing the decoration of the ware called Old Florentine by Dr. Bode, wherein a similar artistic effect is attained in the case of the loaded colour. The two mugs in figs. 48 & 49 of this class of pottery not unlikely represent the style of the earliest known phase of the art, but perhaps not precisely that which would have influenced the Italians of the quattrocento.

The tiles from the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem in fig. 50 are probably also of the XVIth Century; others of the same design, but different in colour, are figured in the monumental work by Count Melchior de Vogüé, 'Le Temple de Jerusalem,' 1864, and are there assigned to the above period. They are typical of a form of arabesque ornament which was prolonged over an extended period in the East. The late Sir Wollaston Franks suggested that from their technical character they might have been made at Jerusalem

itself, and as that city was not an important pottery centre, a more primitive style of art would have been produced there than that prevailing at the same time at Damascus.

Figs. 51-54 are copied by permission of Prof. Cav. A. Venturi, Editor of 'Le Gallerie Nazionale,' from an account in Vol. III. of that work describing a pottery-find at Pula, in Sardinia. The vessels appear to the present writer to be Spanish-Moorish in style; he has not, however, seen the originals, and the illustrations being in a half-tint process from photographs, the definition of the ornament is rather obscure. It is possible that the light parts may represent powerful blues and the dark ones bright yellows. The dimensions of the objects are not given. The writer of the accompanying text states that one of the vessels has depicted upon it "una stemma gentilizio di forma triangolare, con cinque linea disposta in sbarra e che richiama la piu antica forma dello scudo nell' arte del blasone." The fact of the publication of the illustrations in the annual volume recording the acquisitions made by the public museums in Italy, is a gratifying instance of the interest taken by the Ministry of Public Instruction in discoveries relating to ceramic art.

THE technical term "body" employed in the description of the objects represented in the following pages is applied to the clay or earth of which the vessels are made. When it is qualified as white, it is meant that it was so originally. From long burial in the earth the body loses its purity of colour and will frequently become brown. Again, with the ground on which the ornament is displayed, when it is stated to be white it is not meant that the white

is of the same quality as in modern English porcelain. The white grounds covered with a transparent vitreous glaze of the early Oriental wares are usually similar in tone to ivory. When the transparent glaze is thick, as at the feet of the vessels and in the "tears," its tint is slightly greenish. In every case the body is what is known as a soft paste. All the objects except the Persian and Spanish-Moorish (which have a stanniferous glaze) are termed by the Italians Mezza Maiolica. It may be mentioned that the quality of the colour in vitreous glazed pottery is more harmonious and refined than in that which is tin glazed. Colours which come clear and bright from the furnace by the former method, will be dull and opaque by the latter. Further, much of the soft and beautiful quality of the colour on early Oriental pottery arises from the variety in the depth of the separate tints and the admixture of particles of other tints, arising from what would now be termed the impurity of the pigments. The aim of the Oriental potters appears to have been the reverse of their modern European successors, who endeavour to arrive at an uniform equality of tint; hence the coldness and hardness of their colour.

It might be more convenient, and would certainly prevent occasional misapprehension, if writers on Maiolica were to agree to adopt a common terminology when referring to the different kinds of vases, plates, &c. made by the potters. The Italian names for the vessels would seem to be the most fitting. In some cases they have no foreign synonyms, as for instance, albarello. It might appear pedantic to use the Persian or Arabic names for the Oriental pottery, but that objection would scarcely hold good in relation to examples of Maiolica.

Figs. 3, 6, 16, 40, and 41 appeared in a former work by the writer entitled 'Italian Ceramic Art: Examples of Maiolica and Mezza-Maiolica fabricated before 1500.' M.DCCC.XCVII.

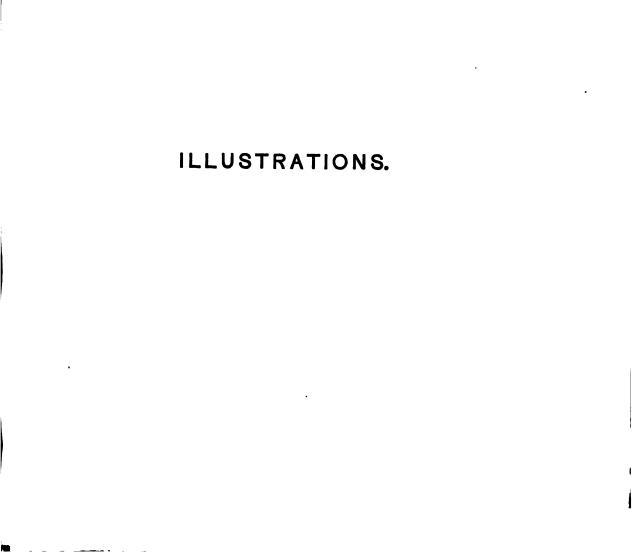






Fig. 1.—BOCCALE. Curved foot, hollowed; globular belly, thin neck, curved handle springing from shoulder and inserted into middle of neck; lip missing. Slip on pale red body, lead glass in light olive-green. Graffito ornament. From Smyrns. H. 20 cm. British Museum.



Fig. 2.—SCODELLO. Vertical foot, hollowed; belly curved at base, flattened sides. Slip on pale red body, lead glaze. Graffito ornament; coloured raw sienna and deep green on toned white ground. The vessel has been let into a wall. From Cyprus. D. 14 cm.

British Museum.



Fig. 3.—SCODELLO. Vertical foot, hollowed; curved belly, flattened aides, projecting lip. Slip on red body, lead glaze. Graffito ornament; coloured in rich raw sienna and olive-green on warm buff ground. From Egypt. D. 17 cm.

British Museum.



Fig. 4.—JAR. Small foot, hollowed; the belly expanding upwards, narrow neck, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze dropping into tears at foot. Ornament drawn in black on white ground; painted in blue which has run, the horizontal bands black, the vertical black and blue. H. 315 mm.

South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 5.—JAR. Small foot, hollowed; the belly expanding upwards, diminishing neck, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze dropping into tears at foot. Ornament drawn in black on white ground; painted in blue which has run, the horizontal bands black. H. 34 cm.

South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 6.—ALBARELLO. Small foot, hollowed; cylindrical, slightly concave, diminishing neck, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament modelled in low relief and outlined in black on white ground, painted in blue which has run; a band of pale olive-green with circles, reserved, on the shoulder. H. 26 cm. British Museum.



Fig. 7.—ALBARELLO. Small foot, hollowed; cylindrical, concave, diminishing neck, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze dropping into tears. Ornament drawn in black on white ground; painted in blue which has run, horizontal bands black. Two of the vertical bands contain Arabic inscriptions. H. 27 cm.

The late Major W. J. Myers's Collection.



Fig. 8.—JAR. Foot curved outwards, hollowed; belly expanding upwards, neck curving outwards, projecting lip. White body, turquoise vitreous glaze, same glaze inside. Ornament and inscription painted in black, turquoise ground. Syrian? H. 28 cm. Henry Wallis.



Fig. 9.—JAR. Foot curved outwards, hollowed; belly expanding upwards; neck missing (supplied in brass). White body, turquoise vitreous glaze thickening at foot. Ornament painted in black, turquoise ground. Syrian? H. 143 mm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 10.—JAR. Foot curved outwards, hollowed; belly expanding upwards, neck curving outwards, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze, originally turquoise, now white. Ornament painted in black. Syrian? H. 9 cm. British Museum.



Fig. 11.—VASE (fragment). Flat foot; expanding belly vertically ridged, the neck, handle, and spout cut off (restored in outline). Whitish body, turquoise vitreous glaze thick at the foot and run to tears. H. 155 mm.

Henry Wallis.



Fig. 12.—BACINO. Vertical foot, hollowed, pierced; curved sides, rim merging into sides. White body, vitreous glase, thick at centre in the inside, thickening at foot outside. Ornament spaced in broad blue bands, drawn in black on white ground. Syrian? D. 24 cm.

Henry Wallis.



Fig. 13.—SCODELLUCCIA. Small foot, hollowed; curved sides. White body, vitreous glaze thickening at foot. Ornament drawn in black on white ground, painted blue at edge of rim. Syrian? D. 13 cm.

Henry Wallis.



Fig. 14.—SCODELLO. Slightly hollowed at foot; the shoulder sharply retreating, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze dropping into tears. Ornament drawn in black, with addition in blue, spaces filled in with brown, on white ground. Syrian? D. 16 cm.

Henry Walks.



Fig. 15.—BACINO. Small foot, hollowed; curved sides. Body appears reddish, but was probably originally white, vitreous glaze. Ornament in black and deep blue on white ground. Syrian? D. 30 cm.

Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 16.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot; cylindrical, narrowing upwards, similarly the long neck, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glase running into tears. Ornament drawn in black, painted in deep blue on white ground. Syrian? Brought by Lord Leighton, P.R.A., from the East. H. 23 cm. British Museum.



Fig. 17.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot, cylindrical, concave; neck, sloping upwards, projecting lip. White body, turquoise vitreous glaze. Ornament painted in black, turquoise ground. Syrian? H. 15 cm.

British Museum.



Fig. 18.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot; cylindrical, neck restored. White body, dark green vitreous glaze. Graffito ornament. From Upper Egypt. South Kensington Museum possesses a large tazza of a similar ware (1420, 1897) reddish brown in colour. It was presented by the late Major Myers, who obtained it from an excavation at Akhmeem in Upper Egypt. The ware is probably Egyptian. H. 19 cm. British Museum.



Fig. 19.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot; cylindrical, expanding neck, projecting lip. Slip on pale red body, light green vitreous glaze. Ornament, horizontal bands graffitato. H. 15 cm. British Museum.



Fig. 20.—JAR. Small foot, hollowed; belly expanding upwards, ribbed; diminishing neck, projecting lip. White body, vitreous glaze, thick at foot, crackelled; interior and the hollow of foot in turquoise glaze. Ornament painted in deep blue which has run, on white ground. Damascus. H. 31 cm.



Fig. 21.—TWO WALL-TILES. Hexagonal. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament: the border in turquoise-blue, the confining lines in dark brown; r., centre painted in deep blue which has run, on white ground; l., the lute in brown, the birds in blue. Damascus. H. 19 cm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 22.—TWO WALL-TILES. Similar in technique to fig. 21; r. in brown and cobalt, l. in deep blue. Damascus. H. 19 cm.
South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 23.—TWO WALL-TILES. Similar in technique to fig. 21. Damascus. II. 19 cm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 24.—TWO WALL-TILES. Similar in technique to fig. 21.
Damascus. H. 19 cm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 25.—TWO WALL-TILES. Similar in technique to fig. 21.
Damascus. H. 19 cm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 26.—TWO WALL-TILES. Similar in technique to fig. 21.
Damascus. H. 19 cm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 27.—TWO WALL-TILES. Pentagonal. Similar in technique to fig. 21. The same width, Damascus.

South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 28.—WALL-TILE. Hexagonal. White body, pale green vitreous glaze. Ornament painted in black, green ground. The border has been cut away. Damascus. H. 175 mm.

South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 29.—FRAGMENT. The centre of a bowl. Hollow foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament painted in brown on buff ground. From the Cairo mounds. H. 112 mm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 30.—FRAGMENT. The centre of a bowl. Hollow foot. White body, deep greenish-blue vitreous glaze. Ornament painted in black, on greenish-blue ground. From the Cairo mounds. H. 10 cm.

Henry Wallis.



Fig. 31.—FRAGMENT. The centre of a bowl. Hollow foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament drawn in black, painted in brown, black and blue on white ground. From the Cairo mounds. H. 145 mm. South Kensington Museum.



Fig. 32.—FRAGMENT. The centre of a bowl. Hollow foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament drawn in black, painted in brown, black and blue on white ground. From the Cairo mounds. H. 11 cm. South Kensington Museum.

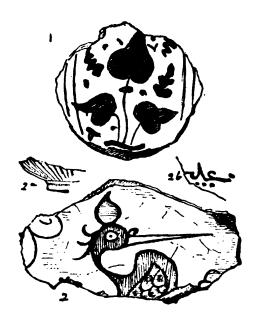


Fig. 33.—(1) FRAGMENT. The centre of a bowl. Hollow foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament painted in blue on white ground. From excavation at Reggio. H. 7 cm.

Municipal Museum at Reggio in Calabria.

(2) FRAGMENT. The centre of a bowl. Hollow foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament drawn in brown, painted in blue, green, and brown on white ground. (2a) The reverse. (2b) The inscription on foot. From the Cairo mounds. H. 56 mm.

British Museum.



Fig. 34.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot. Cylindrical, straight neck, projecting lip, upper part restored. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in gold lustre, showing prismatic reflections, on white ground. Persian. H. 22 cm. Henry Wallis.



Fig. 35.—WALL-TILE. Star-shaped. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament reserved, painted in deep ruby lustre on white ground. Persian. H. 65 mm.

Musée du Louvre.

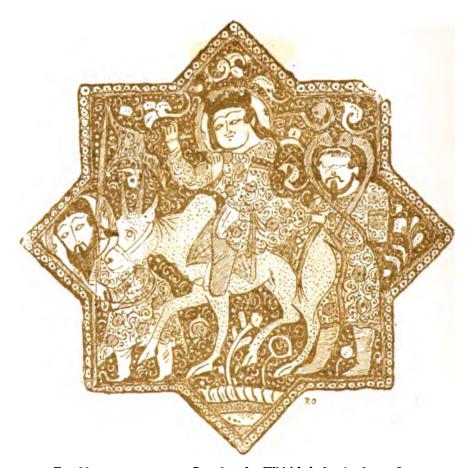


Fig. 36.—WALL-TILE. Star-shaped. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in lustre, green and turquoise on white ground. The face of the man on the right is partially obliterated. Persian. The illustration has been reproduced from a pen-and-ink drawing by Señora de Osma. H. 205 mm. Señor Don G. I. de Osma.



Fig. 37.—JAR. Amphora-shaped with two large flat handles; pear-shaped body, long neck, ribbed at lower part, canellated above, moulded lip. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in gold lustre on white ground, the pattern in parts almost obliterated. Hispano-Moresque. H. 1 m. 17 cm.



Fig. 38.—ALBARELLO. Straight foot, hollowed; cylindrical, slightly concave; straight neck, projecting lip. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in deep gold lustre and deep blue on white ground. Hispano-Moresque. H. 39 cm.

British Museum (Henderson Collection).



Fig. 39.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot, cylindrical, alightly concave; diminishing neck, lip missing. Whitish body, tin glase. Ornament painted in golden lustre and blue on white ground. Hispano-Moresque. H. 38 cm.

Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 40.—VASE. Broad foot, hollowed, narrowing to globular belly, tall neck widening to rim, small lip; wing-shaped handles, perforated. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in gold lustre and blue on white ground: the two medallions contain (1) the Medici arms; (2) a Medici "impre-a," a diamond ring with three ostrich feathers. Hispano-Moresque. H. 56 cm. Mr. F. DuCane Godman, F.R.S.



Fig. 41.—BOCCALE. Broad foot, hollowed; belly merging into trilobed spouted neck, broad flat handle. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament in deepish golden lustre on white ground. Hispano-Moresque. H. 16 cm.

Henry Wallis.



Fig. 42.—AZULEJO, or rectangular Plaque. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in golden lustre on white ground. Hispano-Moresque. (Rather more than half here figured.) H. 90 cm.

Señor Don G. I. de Osma-



Fig. 43.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot; cylindrical, slightly concave; curved neck, projecting lip. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in deep golden lustre and dark blue on white ground. Hispano-Moresque. H. 28 cm.



Fig. 44.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot; cylindrical, slightly concave; diminishing neck, projecting lip. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in golden lustre and deep blue on white ground. Scroll-work scratched in very fine lines on the lustre ornament has been omitted, also in fig. 46. Hispano-Moresque. H. 30 cm. Henry Wallis.



Fig. 45.—ALBARELLO. Hollowed foot; cylindrical, slightly concave; straight neck, projecting lip. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in golden lustre and deep blue on white ground. Hispano-Moresque. H. 36 cm.



Fig. 46.—BACINO. Convex in centre, curved sides, sloping rim. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in golden lustre and deep blue on white ground; the reverse a large eagle with scroll-work in deep golden lustre. Hispano-Moresque. 1). 40 cm. Henry Wallis.



Fig. 47.—PLATE. Slightly convex in centre, curved sides, flat rim. Whitish body, tin glaze. Ornament painted in golden lustre inclining to ruby and deep blue: the reverse is similar in design and colour but without the blue leaves and flowers. Hispano-Moresque. D. 24 cm.

Henry Wallis.



Fig. 48.—MUG. Cylindrical shape, hollowed foot; flat handle attached from lip to foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament outlined in black, painted in green, violet, and piled-on red in the spots and dots, white ground. So-called Rhodian. II. 21 cm. Henry Wallis.



Fig. 49.—MUG. Cylindrical shape, hollowed foot; flat handle attached from lip to foot. White body, vitreous glaze. Ornament outlined in brown, painted in green, cobalt-blue, and piled-on red, white ground. So-called Rhodian. From Lord Leighton's collection. H. 23 cm.

Henry Wallis.

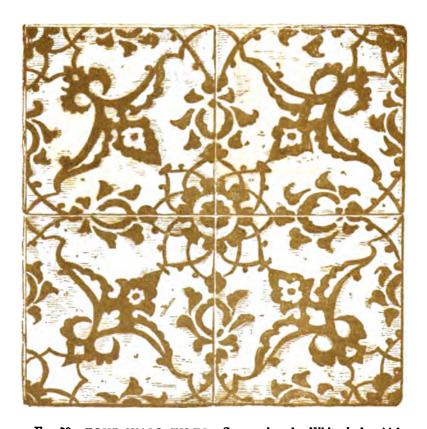


Fig. 50.—FOUR WALL-TILES. Square shaped. White body, thick vitreous glaze, crackled. Ornament in dark blue on white ground. From the Mosque of Omar, Jerusalem. From the collection of the late M. Charles Schefer. Each tile 19 cm. square. Henry Wallis.

